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MEMORANDUM

TO: Parents and Guardians
FROM: [VT State Board of Education](#)
SUBJECT: [Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program](#)
DATE: 11/4/15

You have received, or will receive in the near future, a report of your child's standardized "Smarter Balanced" test results from the *Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program*. This report is provided in the national assessment consortium's format. We are working on a friendlier and more appropriate presentation for next year.

Tests are useful if used within the limits of their design but they cannot provide you with a comprehensive picture, by themselves. The State Board and Agency of Education support using a broad range of tools, measures and methods to help you and educators understand and improve your child's learning.

We call your attention to the box labeled "scale score and overall performance." These levels give too simplistic and too negative a message to students and parents. The tests are at a very high level. In fact, no nation has ever achieved at such a level. Do not let the results wrongly discourage your child from pursuing his or her talents, ambitions, hopes or dreams.

These tests are based on a narrow definition of "college and career ready." In truth, there are many different careers and colleges and there are just as many different definitions of essential skills. In fact, many (if not most) successful adults fail to score well on standardized tests. If your child's scores show that they are not yet proficient, this does not mean that they are not doing well or will not do well in the future.

We also recommend that you not place a great deal of emphasis on the "claims" or sub-scores. There are just not enough test items to give you reliable information.

Essentially, these test scores best serve to show the progress that our schools are making, and to help teachers adapt their curriculum to fit the needs of their students.

As a parent, encourage your child to reach as high as he or she can. Let her or him know that they are worthy and capable. Keep track of how well your child is doing over time and use that information to help your child grow as a learner. Meet with your child's teachers so that they understand your child and so you can work as a team.

We must give every student a thorough and comprehensive education, and provide the nurturing and support each child needs to grow into an effective, productive, and self-directed citizen. In turn, these young people must be the strong parents for the generations of Vermonters yet to come.